MUSEUM NEWS

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THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

No. 43 TOLEDO, OHIO January 1923

A BINDING FROM THE LIBRARY OF JEAN GROLIER

The Gift of President Edward D. Libbey

A GROLIER BINDING

THE collection of beautiful and historical bindings belonging to the Toledo Museum of Art has recently been enriched by a number of important acquisitions, the most notable of these being the Grolier binding herewith reproduced, the gift of President Edward D. Libbey. Grolier bindings are rarities and are among the choicest treasures of the great museums and libraries of the world.

Jean Grolier, Vicomte d'Aguisy, Treasurer General of France, famous statesman, scholar and collector, was born in 1479. He was the first great patron of fine printing and binding, and in his magnificent library there were three thousand volumes, about three hundred and fifty of which are known to still exist.

The covers of his books bear the well known motto GROLIERII ET AMICORUM (Grolier and his friends). After Grolier's death, his books were divided among his heirs, the greater portion becoming the property of his son-in-law Mery d'Vic, Keeper of the Seals under Louis XIII. They remained in possession of the family until 1676, when they were sold at public auction.

While the subject matter of the volumes which found a place in the library of Grolier is in many instances of great importance, the present value of his books lies in the glory and beauty of the bindings in which they are housed. However, between the covers of this particular volume there is much to delight the student and the connoisseur. It is a work by Erasmus printed at Basle, a city famous for its learned printers. It is from the press of John Froben, with whom Erasmus was associated at various times as editor or as one of the correctors of the press. Erasmus had been attracted to Basle because of the great reputation of Froben as a printer, and for a period he was an inmate of Froben's home.

Grolier added further interest and value to this particular volume by inserting a leaf inlaid with Durer's fine engraved portrait of Erasmus, which in itself is a great artistic treasure. On page 444, probably in Grolier's own handwriting, is written in ink, "Io Grolierii Lugduneii et Amicorum." The binding itself is in brown calf with gold lines, arabesques and the interlacing design characteristic of nearly all of Grolier's bindings.

This volume, after it passed from the hands of the descendants of Grolier, became the property of a number of famous collectors, including the Marquis Bruyere-Chalabre, the Marquis d'Adda, and Fairfax Murray. A curious contrast to the amiable inscription on Grolier's books suggesting that they were the property of his friends, was the custom of another French collector, whose book-plate bore a text from the parable of the ten virgins, "Go to them that sell and buy for yourselves."

A HORN BOOK

KNOWLEDGE was jealously guarded in the Middle Ages. The books of the times, beautiful manuscripts written by hand and illuminated in many colors, were treasured within monastery and castle. Not only was the cost of such books prohibitive to ordinary people, but up until 1412 in England, laborers, farmers and mechanics were actually forbidden to send their children to school. But fortunately the fifteenth century was a period of great progress. Then new worlds were discovered, printing was invented, and democracy began a new growth. But when produced by the new process, books were still too valuable to be entrusted to the careless hand of the child, and so a very clever substitute for a book was invented. This was the Horn Book, the primer of our ancestors. A frame of wood or leather was made, with a handle, which latter was punched so that a cord or thong might be inserted, and attached to the pupil's girdle. On this frame there were rudely painted letters and figures. Within it was placed a single leaf bearing the alphabet in small and capital letters, and the Lord's Prayer. This leaf was protected by a thin and transparent slice of horn—whence the name Horn Book. These continued to be used until the early part of the eighteenth century, and are frequently mentioned by contemporary writers, including Shakespeare.

The Toledo Museum has recently acquired and installed with its collection of early books the Horn Book here reproduced, which probably dates from the seventeenth century. It is one of the many interesting links between the clay tablets of the Babylonian school child, and the printed book of the student of today.

A HORN BOOK

MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES

THE membership card of the Toledo Museum of Art now admits the holder to practically every museum of importance, whether of art, history or science, in the United States and Canada. During the past summer arrangements were made by the Curator with eighty-one institutions for the exchange of membership privileges. The Toledo Museum welcomes members of all of them, when in our city, to visit the galleries and to attend any lectures, concerts or classes then in progress. On the back of our membership cards is printed a list arranged alphabetically by cities, and opposite each the names of the cooperating museums located there. Our members may present their cards at any of these and be assured of free admission to them, and to such of their activities as the facilities and regulations of each will permit. It is hoped thru this arrangement to encourage the members of every museum in the country to visit those in all other cities, and thus bring about a closer relation between museums and a wider interest on the part of their members.

COMING EXHIBITIONS

THE Museum has planned an unusually interesting schedule of exhibitions for the early months of 1923. Oil and watercolor paintings and the graphic arts—works of both foreign and American artists—will be represented in the program of exhibits which the Museum offers.

An important exhibition will be held in February, when about thirty paintings by the late William Merritt Chase come to the Museum. In the group are portraits of his family and some of his well known still life paintings, including The Belgian Melon, which he did in Bruges in 1912, and which some critics have ranked with the still life of the old masters. For many years before his death in 1916, Chase was probably the greatest teacher of painting in this country, numbering among his pupils some of the best known American artists of today.

In one of the small galleries during the same month, will be shown paintings by Howard Beach, a Buffalo artist, who has recently come into prominence with his delightful paintings of flowers and still life.

At the same time the Print Galleries will be filled with an exhibition of prints by members of The Brooklyn Society of Etchers, which includes such men as George Elmer Browne, Arthur W. Heintzelman, Ernest D. Roth, Frank W. Benson, and others whose works from time to time have been seen at the Museum.

March will bring to the Museum about eighty prints selected from the Czechoslovak Graphic Arts collection owned by Dr. Henry J. John, of Cleveland, Ohio. It is only recently that the art of Czechoslovakia and its neighboring countries has come into prominence and it is now attracting widespread attention. This is the first time that the art of this country has been shown in Toledo and the works in this collection are of surprising variety and beauty.

The Toledo Federation of Art Societies will hold its Sixth Annual Exhibition during April. Each year more and better paintings have been submitted and it is gratifying to see the growth and improvement in the works of our Toledo artists. A splendid showing is expected this year. Further announcements will be made as the time for the exhibition approaches.

Nell L. Jaffe.

THE COLUMBUS WOODCUT 1494

THE COLUMBUS WOODCUT

AT least those old fellows back in the fifteenth century were enterprising—but more of this a little later on.

For the moment let us recall a grade school event and date, viz., Columbus discovered land on the western hemisphere October 12, 1492.

So far it's easy sailing but of the events immediately following we are not so cock-sure. Still let us proceed.

He returned to Spain arriving in the harbor of Palos March 15, 1493, having stopped for a chat with the King of Portugal en route. Within a very short time his letters describing his discoveries were put into types, which were accompanied by very crude woodcuts, illustrating the great event. By October, 1493, the discovery had been done in rhyme by Guiliano Dati, a popular poet, and was sung about the streets. It consisted of four leaves of coarse type and was accompanied by an illustration which depicted Ferdinand sitting on the eastern shores of the world, while Columbus was shown flushing a covey of aboriginals in the tropical herbage of the western shore.

Recur then to our opening sentence about the enterprise of the fifteenth centuryites. They were enterprising—very much so, but by the same token they were short on accuracy. To them the picture was the thing, for illustrations in those days were new and wonderful contrivances. It did not disturb the early designer of a woodcut one jot that Ferdinand was represented as an eye witness to the discovery of the New World.

A copy of this early woodcut is among the treasures of the Biblioteca Columbina at Seville, Spain, where it was seen by the writer during the past summer. It is one of the first attempts to picture the new world.

By the way, this library of 30,000 volumes was formed by Fernando, the son of Columbus, and bequeathed to the people; more evidence of fifteenth century enterprise,—but again, to proceed hurriedly toward the meat of our article.

Another woodcut belonging to the period following immediately the return of Columbus to Spain, is one owned by the Toledo Museum of Art and herewith reproduced. It shows Columbus approaching land in a small rowboat, holding in his hands a loving cup as a peace offering to a group of timid natives huddled on the shore. In the immediate foreground, again evidence of the enterprising inaccuracy of the early artist, is a galley bristling with oars, while in truth Columbus sailed in caravels. However as illustrating of whatever character was then only in its infancy, any attempt whatever to place before the eager eyes of Europe even a crude suggestion of the facts was a great and praiseworthy enterprise.

These cuts then were gazed upon with amazement and those fortunate enough to view them did so reverently with no quibbling over galleys or caravels. They saw Columbus landing where land had never been; they saw natives from beyond the rim of the world where humans had never before existed. It was enough,—why quibble?

We of today should induce within ourselves this same spirit when viewing any work, however crude, by any craftsman who wrought

without precedent, feeling his way in darkness over the uncharted seas of our evolution. This poor woodcut, then, is a masterpiece and if it thrills you not, evolution has played you a sorry trick, indeed.

The cut belonging to the Toledo Museum is exceedingly rare, being one of the four in this country. The others are in the splendid collection of Americana in the John Carter-Brown library at Providence, and in the Harvard College and Lenox libraries. The Columbus Library at Seville has no copy.

Our cut appeared in 1494 in an edition of the letters of Columbus, in which he described his discovery and which was printed in Basle and was bound in with the drama by Verardus on the capture of Granada from the Moors. One other woodcut on the title page is a full length portrait of King Ferdinand of Spain.

We are not treasuring these cuts because of their historical importance. They take a place in our collections merely as examples of early woodcut illustrations. Another early woodcut acquired by the Museum is the first picture of a printing press ever printed, but as Kipling says, that is another story.

Geo. W. Stevens

MRS. CHARLES GARDNER'S GIFT

MRS. CHARLES GARDNER of Newtonville, Mass., formerly of Toledo, who has recently returned from an extended tour around the world, has presented to the Toledo Museum a group of unique objects from Persia, India and Thibet. While on her trip she deviated from the beaten paths of the ordinary tourist to touch at remote but highly interesting places. Kashmir is two hundred miles beyond the railway, and Thibet is still further on, and so the objects which have come from those distant places are doubly interesting.

From Persia came a fine old copper dinner bowl, jug and samovar. From Kashmir a large plate and from Thibet a prayer wheel, a temple bell, a devil dagger, a number of amulets, some masks, a pair of bird gods and a brass Buddha. All of the objects are of metal, the amulets and masks being inlaid with turquoise. The samovar, jug, dinner bowl and Kashmir plate are of copper, richly engraved with conventionalized foliage motifs, and fine Arabic inscriptions. The two bird gods are especially interesting, for upon the body of a bird there has been mounted the upper part of the body and the head of a woman, and they are gods of health. The devil dagger, short and sharp, is supposed to be used to curse an enemy by pinning to the ground a paper image of him. The use of the prayer wheel is of course well known, and each of the other objects has its particular place in the life of the people in these far-off countries.

The accompanying illustration represents a very fine brass Buddha from Lhasa in Thibet. The background is formed of thin brass sheets of repousse work as is also the base, while the statue of Buddha itself is cast and engraved.

The eighteen objects in this collection form a most interesting group, illustrative of the customs and art of one of the least known portions of the Orient. They have been installed in Gallery 11 where the splendid engraved designs are already serving a useful purpose in instructing the hundreds of children in the Museum's many classes.

THIBETAN BUDDHA
The Gift of Mrs. Charles Gardner

MUSEUM NEWS

Toledo Museum of Art

EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY, PRESIDENT

EDITOR, GEORGE W. STEVENS, M. A
Director of the Toledo Museum of Art.
ASSOCIATE, BLAKE-MORE GODWIN, M. A.

No. 43 JANUARY 1923

Art is that science whose laws applied to all things made by man make them most pleasing to the senses.

EDITORIAL

WE are safe in assuming that a large percentage of our members have no conception of the valuable educational work being carried on by our Museum. They perceive its beauty, understand something of the value of its exhibits, realize that it gives many people pleasure, but do not fully sense its importance as a great and necessary educational asset.

All this is natural enough, for most people are busy with their personal affairs, and in these crowded and perplexing days, a person may very properly be completely immersed in problems touching his own business and the immediate circle of his relatives and friends. Such an one may contribute generously to all public projects as a duty and as a matter of course, and while they do not further vitalize our civic consciousness with the injection of their personality, they are good substantial generous citizens, the backbone of our civic life.

To possess a civic backbone is, of course, something of an asset, but there is more still to be desired; in the way of sensitive responsive nerves, warm coursing blood, throbbing hearts and those mental manifestations of sympathy, vision, interest and enthusiasm, which, after all, are the ingredients which combined make for a much desired civic consciousness.

Toledo has gone far, but it is by no means a complete and perfect thing. The machinery is in motion but it needs that vitalization which must come from the citizenry itself. More people must become thoroughly interested in the development of our Museum, our libraries, our schools, our parks and boulevards, our civic center and all those things which are to feed the eye with beauty and the brain with knowledge. Knowledge and beauty are the ends for which we strive. The routine of trade and commerce, tho but the means to such an end, is too often mistaken for the end itself, and communities thrive bountifully midst squalor and ignorance. Like the Eskimo, our jowls are well greased with a banquet of blubber, while with dull satisfaction we contemplate a wilderness stretching to our far horizon.

The natural evolution of a community or a race is a slow process. From our arboreal ancestors to present man, 250 centuries have elapsed at the minimum. True, we have gone far but hordes of so-called savage people still exist in many parts of the world, notwithstanding 250 centuries of striving. In their present environment many more centuries may elapse before they approach us, even remotely, in thought or habit. Even so, a child plucked from such an environment and subjected to our American educational system will, in a dozen years, bridge the gap of the centuries. Humans can be Burbanked just as well as vegetables. Why don't we take the hint? By surrounding ourselves with beauty and with art and by teaching the laws of beauty to our own children we will jump them over centuries of mental imprisonment and drudgery.

Briefly, then, the Museum of Art is one of the influences making for mental development, one of the urges in our evolution, one of the forces which help to bridge ages of darkness. It is a good thing—something you help to create and in so doing render a substantial portion of your quota to the civic consciousness.

Ergo—Dues are now DUE.

ANENT TRUSTEE BOOKER

A VERY small bright-eyed, red-headed boy of nine years called on the Director of the Museum a few days ago to arrange for entrance in our School of Design.

We told him gently but firmly that there were two hundred other young people at the moment on our waiting list and that the classes were somewhat advanced, having reached the twelfth problem which would necessitate making up much back work.

Nothing daunted the little chap emphatically observed, "Can't help it—got to get in—can't waste another year of my life." Well, he got in, but there are two hundred more just as eager.

It is the same with all our activities. We take care of as many young people as space, time and funds will allow. It is hard to say "no" to any bright youngster seeking self improvement. Saying "yes" thousands of times in a season brings us face to face with our financial needs.

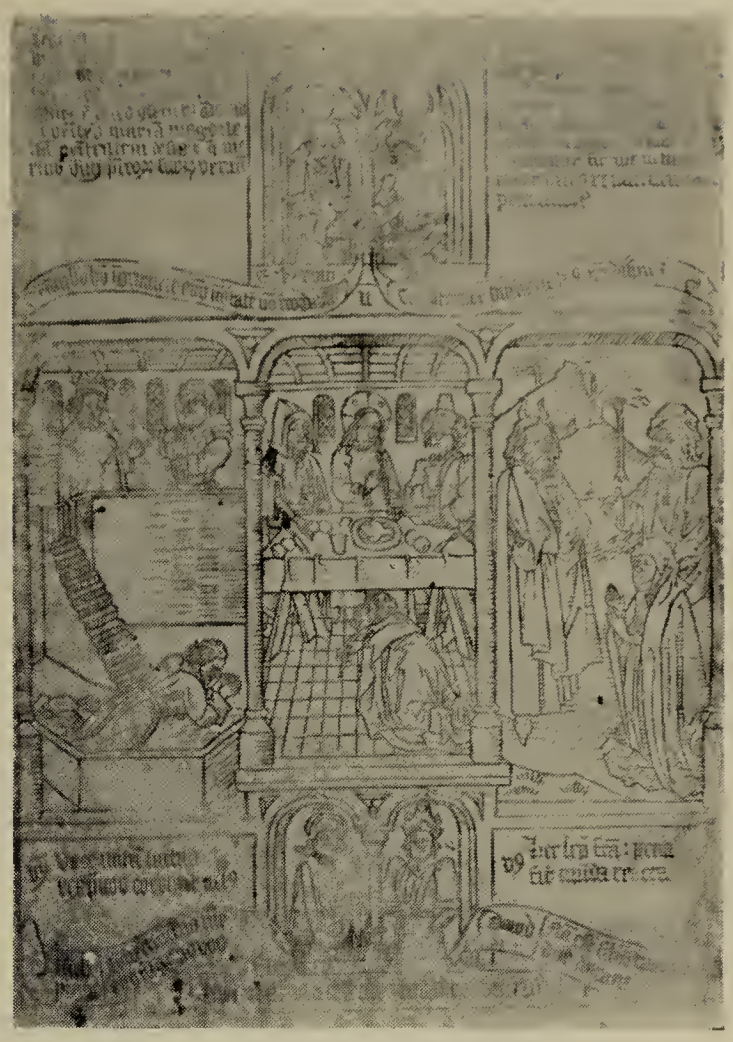
To do the work we have already undertaken will call for more income in 1923. To increase our usefulness will call for still more. We therefore have decided to launch a membership campaign in the early future. William M. Booker, who for long has been foremost in many civic projects and who was recently elected a Trustee of this institution, has been appointed Chairman of the Membership Committee. With his usual efficiency, he will conduct the drive, assisted by the other members of the Committee, who are, Sidney Spitzer, William E. Wright, George B. Orwig and Alfred B. Koch.

When the time comes many of our members will no doubt be called upon to lend a hand in the work. We hope they will respond cheerfully as is the custom of Toledo people. Some members may have suggestions to offer in this connection, in which case they are requested to communicate with Mr. Booker.

Dues are now DOING.

OUR BLOCK BOOKS

IN that portion of the Museum's collection which is presenting the story of printing, engraving and illustrating, will be found three rare and interesting examples of block books, which were the stepping-stones between books written by hand and the invention of movable type. In these books the crude pictures and the text as well were carved on a single block for each page. The first of all the block books appeared early in the Fifteenth Century and was known as the Biblia Pauperum, or the Bible of the Poor. Of this rare book we possess two pages, one of which is herewith reproduced.



THE FIRST BLOCK BOOK

Block books were produced for only a short period and are exceedingly rare. While they were naturally the forerunners of printing, they persisted for about sixty years after the invention of movable type. The last block book of which we have any record is also a Biblia Pauperum and was made by Zoan Andrea Vavassore at Venice about 1510, and was by the way the only block book ever done in Italy. The Museum possesses a complete example of this book and also a page from the block book known as the Apocalypse of St. John, a work almost as famous as the Biblia Pauperum. Rude as were these pages both in printing and drawing they nevertheless expressed a certain vigor of design and to the people of the Fifteenth Century they must have appeared wonderful indeed.

The first Biblia Pauperum is a small folio, containing forty pages printed upon one side only with a pale brownish ink, used in many

early prints. The impression was probably secured by means of a rubber, for it is doubtful if a press of any kind had been developed at that time. The pages are arranged so that they can be pasted back to back. Each page is divided into five compartments, separated by pillars and mouldings of architectural design, which immediately recall the division of a church window. In the compartments are depicted Biblical scenes.

These blocks naturally wore out in time, but as the borders and other parts broke down the blocks were cut up and the various portions used for purposes of illustration in later books, printed from movable types in many parts of Europe.

EARLY BLOCK BOOK, THE APOCALYPSE

HOGARTH PLATES ACQUIRED

WILLIAM HOGARTH is a great name in English art. Born in 1697, he came upon the field when a man of his qualities was needed to rescue English painting from the impasse of foreign imitation and adherence to unassimilated formulae into which it had come. Hogarth came of the middle class, and he was ever faithful to its traditions. As an artist he saw the futility of the weak, aristocratic graces that had characterized his English predecessors, and in his own work brought art down to earth again by his clear vision and accurate portrayal of the life which surrounded him. Partly as a result of his work and teachings English art within but a few years changed from the most feeble to the most virile in Europe.

And yet Hogarth was not understood until recent years. He was long considered only a story-telling painter. The taste of the time demanded pictures in the grand historical style. Anachronisms such as they usually were repelled him and he did not hesitate to ridicule them by both brush and pen. Because he did not follow the false formulae of the time, he was accused of failing to understand light, color, composition, and even drawing, and his works were dismissed with the remark that he was a satirist, not a painter. The fact is, so nearly equal are his powers as satirist and artist, that we are always in doubt which to admire the most.

He was a thinker as well as artist, and late in life he wrote The Analysis of Beauty in which he set down those aesthetic principles which had been his guide, and which deserves much more study than has been accorded to it. In 1757 he was appointed Sergeant Painter to the King and in 1764 he died.

Hogarth is best known for his moralities of which he painted a number of series. In them good design and dramatic quality are most happily united to produce an artistic sermon against the frailties and vices of his time. From the paintings of all of these series engravings were made, some by Hogarth's own hand, for he was a consummate technician in the art of engraving as well as

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS PLATE ONE BY HOGARTH

The Original Plates the Gift of the late Mr. John Cummings

that of painting. They had a great popular vogue in England. The plates, of the finest copper, were preserved until very recent times. In the late war, however, due to the very great scarcity of the metal in England, many of them were melted down for munitions. A few, however, remained and were disposed of about a year or so ago to important museums and private collectors.

The Toledo Museum was fortunate in securing as the gift of the late Mr. John Cummings the eight plates of the series known as The Rake's Progress. They represent a young dandy who had suddenly come into the fortune of his miser father, lavishing his money on fine clothing and the sycophants with whom he surrounds himself; carousing in the tavern; arrested for debt on his way to Court; married to a rich spinster; squandering her money in a gambling house after he had lost his own; imprisoned for debt; and finally manacled in the mad house to prevent him from destroying himself in his insane fury.

The first of the eight pictures is reproduced in this issue of the Museum News, which serves to show the artist's ability in draftsmanship and composition. The series, leading us from one event to another in the downward path of the young man who had received wealth before he knew how to use it, preaches a great moral lesson in a stern, satirical vein, and we may well believe that Hogarth filled a great need in the moral as well as artistic regeneration of his country.

These eight plates have been installed in the Museum's Print Galleries, for aside from their artistic merit, they are important in showing the technical processes of engraving, and the historical development of that art.

Blake-More Godwin.

THE WOOD SAWYER HORATIO WALKER

Installed in the Maurice A. Scott Gallery by Florence Scott Libbey

A WALKER IN THE SCOTT GALLERY

HORATIO Walker has been called an American Millet. Perhaps Mr. Walker might object to this dragging in Millet, for certainly he is not a conscious and consistent imitator of the great French artist. Equally certainly his technique is his own rather than borrowed from another. On the other hand, he has found here in America, on the little Isle of Orleans in the St. Lawrence River not far from Quebec, a peasant type not unlike that which Millet found in France. Not unlike, in that these descendants of the French, transplanted into a new country, have been less changed by passing events than the peasants of France themselves. Not unlike, also, in that these sturdy yeomen are quite as much of the earth as were Millet's peasants.

And yet the attitude and the viewpoint of the two artists are different. Millet was himself a peasant, born and bred, and he saw as perhaps no other artist ever did, the struggle for existence, the tremendous conflict between the forces of man and those of nature, and in such a painting as The Man with the Hoe,

he set down the utter hopelessness and helplessness of a class ground down by the oppression of its rulers. Walker, however, was the son of an English army officer stationed in Canada, and his view of the peasantry of the New World is objective, whereas Millet's view of that of the Old World was subjective. He sees only the majesty and the dignity of the toil of the fields and the farmyards. His peasants are ever lords of labor. In this discovery of the beauty in monotonous routine and the joy in repose earned by honest toil, he is akin to Israels more than to Millet, and in his magnificent oxen there is also something of Troyon's breadth and strength. There is a classic dignity and simplicity that takes us back to Virgil, who sang of the nobility and glory of pastoral labors, just as Millet's work is reminiscent of Hesiod, in whose poems we find the first cry for social justice raised in Europe.

Influenced in greater or lesser degree by all three, Millet, Troyon and Israels, and perhaps even by others, Walker has thoroly assimilated whatever he may have borrowed, works in a style unmistakably his own, and has long since been recognized as one of our foremost figure painters. And so it is most fitting that his painting, The Wood Sawyer, should grace the walls of the Maurice A. Scott Gallery of the Toledo Museum where it has been installed by Florence Scott Libbey. The subject is homely and simple as is always the case with Walker. A peasant of heavy frame and strong muscle is cutting the logs with a great home-made bucksaw. The background is formed largely by his cottage with its low eaves and high thatched roof. Beyond and at the side are trees already dark from the early frosts of autumn, while the sun setting behind them brightens the whole picture with its rich mellow glow. The other color notes in the picture are interesting—the man's red cap, his pale blue shirt, the darker blue of the woman's back, as she goes about her chores at the cottage door, and the tiniest spot of red that indicates the rooster's comb among the chickens at her feet. Each of these accents is placed accurately and carefully, the brighter colors of the wood sawyer's raiment to draw and focus attention on him; the less pronounced notes in the background to relieve the monotony of its dull tones without unduly interfering with the center of interest.

It is a characteristic work of the artist, showing accurately his favorite type of subject as well as his excellent technique, and is well fitted to represent an important master of American painting among the fine group of works by our artists which Mrs. Libbey is bringing together to show in a comprehensive way the development of the art of painting in this country.

Blake-More Godwin.

I Will Help Maintain The Toledo Museum of Art

I desire to become an Annual Member of The Toledo Museum of Art, paying $10 a year for full privileges for myself and members of my immediate family. And I hereby constitute Geo. W. Stevens, my attorney in fact, in my name and stead, to subscribe my name to the Articles of Incorporation of the corporation.

Name _____

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The Museum is open week days from 10 A. M. to 4 P. M.
On Sundays and Holidays from 1 to 5 P. M.
On Monday evenings from 7 to 10.
Admission is free at all times.
Children and Study Clubs are especially welcome.

MEMBERSHIP

Anyone interested may become an Annual Member of the Museum by paying Ten Dollars a year, which membership gives all members of a family and their out-of-town guests all the privileges of the Museum. There are also Life and other classes of Membership.

PAY TEN DOLLARS A YEAR AND MAKE THE MUSEUM AND ITS FREE EDUCATIONAL WORK FOR ALL THE CHILDREN OF TOLEDO POSSIBLE